

D R A F T

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Ltr fr to Mr. Root

It has been reported to me that both Air Force and our own interest in the security aspects of the WS-117L program have resulted in an improved situation and a general tightening up. However, in this connection, articles which appear in news media referring to WS-117L cause me continuing concern. While I recognize that we are not responsible for nor can we control the skillful, speculative probing of good technical reporters, we must nevertheless do our very best to prevent the exposure of the highly sensitive projects in which we are engaged. In this connection, one of the most alarming aspects is the frequency with which speculation appears relative to "Sky Spies." Since it has now been released openly that the Thor boosted portion of our program (now called DISCOVERER) is oriented to serve other valid objectives, it appears that our security problem can be divided into two portions which may make their solution somewhat easier.

NRO review(s) completed.

As you and a limited number of other people are aware, there are some payloads in the DISCOVERER program which are quite sensitive and have to do with the military exploitation of space capabilities for objectives other than reconnaissance. We need to bear continuously in mind that we and the Air Force run the risk of having the DISCOVERER program drastically interfered with or reduced if idle speculation causes apprehension by those who have authorized the sensitive payloads that their real purpose may be politically unachievable through association in the public mind with a reconnaissance objective.

As to the SENTRY series, it is commonly accepted by the news media (although without official basis) that its purpose is reconnaissance. Your key people should recognize that the security problem surrounding the nation's first reconnaissance efforts with satellites are not only military but political. Even though we may have a technically perfected system, we may not be permitted to use it if idle speculation

has aroused public sentiment in this country and abroad to the extent that its use will appear as a threatening and unpeaceful gesture. Most press speculation cultivates such fear. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us that we be more than usually careful in security provisions applicable to our SENTRY payloads.

The above thoughts are important to us at Lockheed not only from a national interest point of view but also for strictly corporate reasons. We can be proud of our performance in the past relative to especially secure programs. We wish to cultivate to the maximum extent possible a reputation for handling such programs with the greatest discretion and with a maximum degree of real security. As you know this is a difficult thing to do in the aviation industry and a reputation of this kind will be relatively unique and will aid us in further work of any kind requiring these qualifications.

Will you insure that these cautions are passed on to the key personnel in the X A branch?